

The Path to CONVERGENCE

Question: Where is the Connectional Young Adult Ministry taking Young Adults in the CME Church?

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he last Unity Summit which took place in Memphis in September of 2014 contained a series of clarion calls. Our plenary speaker Dr. Evelyn Parker reminded us about the importance of utilizing our gifts in actualizing our vocation, encouraging us to seek the upmost effectiveness in ministry. More importantly, she encouraged us to be bold. Mr. Lynn Hargrow challenged us with a look at the Israelites stuck in Egypt, wanting escape, crying for a political revolution, which eventually came in the form of fire. He asked what were the conditions under which we now call for a fire. What kinds of radical changes do we really want from God in this church and are we ready for what we ask? Rev. Keith Ellison, on the final night of our meeting warned us that as we tried to start fires for God, there would be firefighters who wanted to protect an old order. But most poignant was the provocation from Rev. Keenan Winters to *go beyond just doing something*. Winters suggested that so much of the misdirection we find ourselves in comes from just wanting to do something, anything to say we're not doing nothing.



The spirits of reflection set loose by these appeals stirred underneath, occasionally unleashed in private conversations. When we left Memphis, it was as if a collective subconscious had formed; we knew we had to move differently.

In December of 2014, driven by young adult responses to surveys we had launched and the emerging spirits of change from Memphis, we began to ask ourselves how we might better IGNITE the church in more intentional ministry for young adults. We took seriously that theme of investing adopted by the church.

As such, we want to refocus our energies on investing in local church young adult ministries. This year we will forego the FIRE Retreat with the Unity Summit in order to redirect our resources to fostering connectional and local young adult ministries. Specifically we want to **empower** local congregations,

invest in new digital ministry tools, **expand** connectional access to innovative Christian Education resources, and **partner** with groups outside the denomination to enact broad change.

To those who have wondered what we do outside of the context of conferences, this should be welcome news. In the coming months you will see the CYAM developing more inclusive ministry-attempts to engender the tenants of the FIRE Retreat we hoped to execute: Fellowship, Instruction, Relationship, and Empowerment. As you hear more about these, we invite you to fan the flame, as it says in **1 Timothy 1:6**. Of course, we are continuing to work with the whole church. Young Adult ministry is at its best when we transact with the church, but we understand also that 21st century ministry is not limited to the church. With that in mind that we hope the whole church will continue to expand its reach, which we already see in the ecumenical leadership of our senior bishop in the most recent matters of social justice. As we gather encouragement from each other and support each other, may the new directions we take bring wholeness to the people of God.